



Lower Savannah Travel Management and Coordination Center

A Developing Model for the Lower Savannah Region
of South Carolina

FTA Regional Meeting May, 2008

Lynnda Bassham

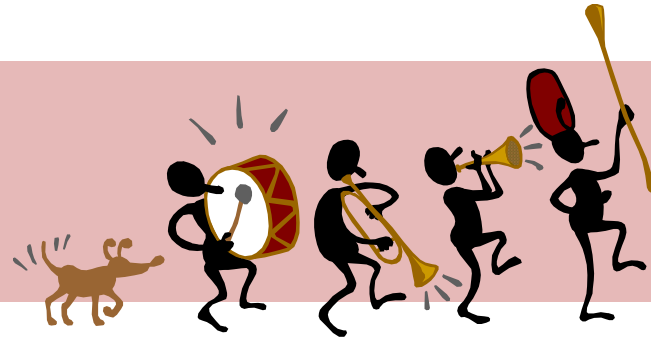
Lower Savannah Council of Governments

Who/What is LSCOG?



- Lower Savannah Council of Governments is a planning and development agency, serving six predominantly rural counties in south-western South Carolina.
- We are also the:
 - Area Agency on Aging
 - Aging and Disability Resource Center
 - Regional Transportation Management Association, (RTMA), responsible for planning, coordination and, in some cases, administration of FTA transit funds and programs
 - SCDOT-designated lead coordination agency
 - Workforce investment act lead agency
 - Highway and transportation planning agency for region

Leading a Change



- We are rural and have higher than average rates of poverty, disability and unemployment.
- We contract for transportation service, but do not currently operate transportation ourselves.
- Transportation is provided in the region by a combination of autonomous human service agencies, who, in several counties, are also public transit providers AND two out-of-region transit authorities who serve parts of our region.
- Our region had no facilitator and no regional structure to pull these autonomous organizations together to coordinate before we became involved.

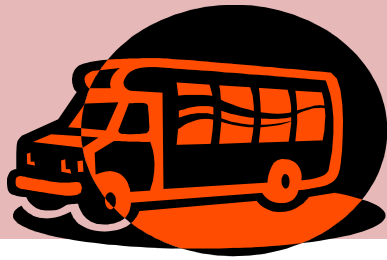


Bringing Together a Network

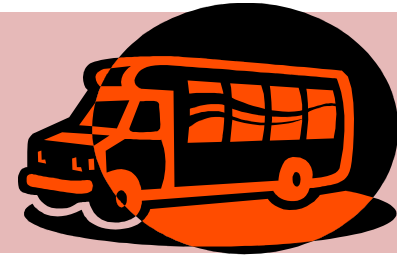
- For **seven years**, at the request of and with the support of our state DOT, we have been building a coordinating network of transit providers to better serve people in our region and helping them to become a team.
- In 2000 we formed a Regional Transportation Management Association (RTMA) to create a structure for bringing together local government and coordinating public, private and human service transit providers.
- Our **RTMA** set the vision for regionally coordinated transportation and a mobility center to help consumers!
- We have been successful at working with local leaders to create new, shared-ride, public transit systems in two of South Carolina's poorest and most rural counties and are working in two others currently.

Mobility Services for All Americans:

- Transit providers want our help to coordinate and to attract new opportunities to provide service and improve the bottom line!
- The public needs one place to call for help and advocacy to find rides and new resources to meet unmet needs.
- We are working now on design and preliminary implementation plans for a Travel Management Coordination Center (TMCC) to meet both of these needs and to become a model for other areas; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the MSAA grant and United We Ride are helping to fund this project.



Trips Affected



- The core providers of transportation now involved in the Lower Savannah Regional Transportation Management Association (RTMA) are providing about **400,000 passenger trips annually**.
- This does not include currently un-coordinated trips made by other human service programs
- An expected outcome of the operation of the TMCC will be to increase the number of trips made through the coordinated network!
- SCDOT projects in their just-released Statewide Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan, that **there will be a need for 1.5 million passenger trips in the region by 2010** – a significant gap between current service and actual need!



Travel Management Coordination Center: (TMCC) – Our Model

- Our TMCC is being designed to offer **mobility management** services
 - helping *consumers* find transportation
 - becoming the regional coordination center for a network of *providers* of health, human service, public and private transportation
- New **technology** can enable better service and meeting critical local needs and *enable new operational practices*
- Designed to create **new roles**, more and **better service and options**
- Involves partnership with local operating partners



What Will Be New?

- Integrated Reporting & Data Management
 - Applied in transportation services and information & referral
- Regional Telephone System
 - IVR, voice recording, performance monitoring, reverse calling, language assistance, flexibility in where phones are answered
- Automated Vehicle Tracking and Electronic Data Communication
 - Automated Vehicle Location / Mobile Data Terminals – great scheduling and management tools!
- Regional Operations
 - Shared staffing, technologies, standards, policies and procedures
 - Coordination of out-of-area trips; new service offerings; more responsive customer service
- Streamlined Billing and Payment Verification Process
 - Fare determination, collection, billing, reconciliation and reporting
- Full Range of Options for Consumer Info and Assistance



Lower Savannah TMCC Stakeholders' Needs Drove Our Design!



Stakeholder Needs Identified



Consumer Needs

- Consumer focused information, assistance and advocacy available from **one source**
- Ability to reach a “live” agent for assistance, when needed; appropriately-used IVR
- Not being required to make 3-5-day-advance reservations for all trips
- Expansion of transportation service hours, destinations and options throughout the region
- Increased payment options when riding

Health/Human Service Agency Needs

- Assistance to find transportation options for their clients to expedite service or care provision
- Education on how to assess for need and to use available transportation
- A mobility manager’s individual assistance with difficult case scenarios
- Assistance from ADRC information, referral and assistance staff on behalf of unmet needs of clients – the more at one stop, the better!

Stakeholder Needs Identified

Transportation Provider Needs

- Leadership to develop more opportunities for diversifying services/business
- Leadership to help providers to work together to meet consumer needs instead of competing against each other
- Acquisition of and assistance with the technology needed to bring about improvements in
 - Data collection & scheduling
 - Reservations
 - Fare Management
 - Trip Verification
 - Eligibility Determination
 - Vehicle tracking
 - System management
 - Communications and service for passengers
 - Reporting
 - Billing



Leadership from the TMCC to provide all partnering transit agencies the benefits of

- Marketing
- Customer service standards
- Driver training
- Standardized safety guidelines
- Training and guidance for using new technology
- Fleet maintenance
- Regional drug & alcohol testing pool
- TMCC advocacy to attract additional transportation programs and funding streams to the region
- TMCC leadership in planning, grant management and monitoring

Stakeholder Needs Identified

Other Needs

- **Funding sources** want:
 - a successful transportation coordination model that is scalable/replicable in other parts of the state region, or country
 - the TMCC to help provide accurate, consistent reporting data from the entire region
- **Organizations** around the state and the country are eager for information on our progress in developing local coordinated public transit systems, and in the development of the TMCC and are asking us to share information
- **Government** (**all** levels) looks to the Lower Savannah COG/TMCC to lead the way to greater efficiency and effectiveness in operations : improvement and enhancement of services to local citizens



Our Model



- Designed to meet all stakeholder needs listed above
- Combines centralized and “virtual” operations for full inclusion of RTMA partners in staffing, answering calls and entering trip data on uniform system
- Will build on the infrastructure of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and offer callers information and assistance on human services and transportation at one call or on the web
- Will require integrated technology deployed through provider network and in the center to make operations more efficient and to link provider network in a coordinated and seamless system
- Will be sustained through mobility management funding from FTA titles, ADRC funding sources and building business for regional network by meeting currently unmet community needs and bring more transportation and reservation calls through the TMCC

EVERYONE AGREES...



- Without a lead entity to serve as the facilitator among local leaders to develop new resources and to make needed system changes, nothing would happen!
- LSCOG has been able to fill this role and by working with others, with has a series of success stories to show for the investment of resources.
- If the TMCC can obtain appropriate support, we expect it to be the newest and biggest success yet!



For More Information

Lynnda Bassham

Lower Savannah Council of Governments

PO Box 850

Aiken, SC 29802

(803) 649-7981

lbassham@lscog.org

